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ABSTRACT

This field study suggests that there exists a direct relationship between an organizational culture and the conflict resolution communication approaches used within the organization. A collegiate greek lettered organization was chosen for study due to the strong identity such organizations generally promote. The organizational culture is defined through description of organizational culture elements such as: environment, values, heroes, rites and rituals, and the cultural network. The described culture is then used as a perspective from which the conflict resolution communication is interpreted. While voting was the established procedure for conflict resolution and decision making, an informal hierarchy of influence existed. Factors determining this influence are: physical size, a good wit, length of association, and office held in the fraternity. The one extensive period of contact with the fraternity was from March 1980 to August 1983. (SO)

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A STUDY OF A GREEK LETTERED SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

A STUDY OF A GREEK LETTERED SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

This field study examines the relationship of organizational culture and conflict resolution communication within a collegiate greek lettered social organization. The organizational culture of the organization is defined through description of organizational culture elements. The described culture is then used as a perspective from which the conflict resolution communication is interpreted. The findings indicate a strong relationship between the organizational culture and the conflict resolution communication approaches used within the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION:
A STUDY OF A GREEK LETTERED SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In recent years, the concept of organizational culture has received increased attention as a viable perspective from which organizations can be studied. This has been evidenced in a variety of publications.[1] The purpose of this article is to analyze the relationship of organizational culture and organizational conflict resolution communication as evidenced through behaviors of organization members. A collegiate greek lettered social organization was selected for study due to the strong identity such organizations generally promote.[2]

Organizational culture is defined as "the spoken system of symbols, symbolic forms, and meanings that constitute and enacts a common sense of work-life."[3] Similar definitions, and paralleled applications, are provided by a variety of theorists.[4] Furthermore, "the cultural analyst's immediate chore is to discover and interpret the spoken systems that are used in organizations' particular socio-cultural context."[5]

Deal and Kennedy describe five specific elements which can be analyzed to understand the culture of an organization: environment, values, heroes, rites and rituals, and the cultural network.[6] The environment, whether it is a business or social environment, is shaped by the goals and objectives of the organization. Values are the basic concepts and beliefs of the organization and they serve to define "success" in concrete

terms for members. Heroes personify the values of the culture and act as role models for others. Rites and rituals are systematic and programmed routines of day-to-day life in the organization. The formal rites and rituals provide visible examples of what the organization stands for. The cultural network ties everything together by serving as a carrier of values and mythology and providing an informal network for the hidden hierarchy of power. These five elements are the basis for any culture.[7]

The study of organizational cultures is useful, in not only clarifying those elements which mold the organization, but in providing direction for development within the organization. Such application is exemplified in "Using Interpretive Research: The Development of a Socialization Program at RCA." In this study, Gary Kreps describes how an organizational socialization program was developed based on the existing organizational culture of the primary organization.[8]

I have used pseudonyms in the place of real names of those individuals and organizations discussed in this study. It is my intention that these individuals and organizations not be adversely affected by my analysis.

The Beta chapter of Sigma Tau Omega was established at Midwestern State University in 1862. Since that time, Beta chapter has never closed its doors, making it the oldest continuously active chapter within Sigma Tau Omega Fraternity. There are 120 chapters which maintain active and alumni membership of over 100,000 Sig Taus. The Good Sig Tau, a pamphlet distributed to each member of the fraternity, outlines the basic principles of Sigma Tau Omega. The fraternity concept is based on close brotherhood, secrecy and initiation, patriotism and civic-mindedness, and student control of fraternity life. Emphasis is stressed on a "triple-headed strategy for

brotherhood": social improvement, moral improvement, and intellectual improvement. A portion of the Sig Tau creed exemplifies the aforementioned.

> I believe in Sigma Tau Omega as an abiding influence to help me do my work, fulfill my obligations, maintain my self respect, and bring about that happy life wherein I may more truly love my fellow man, serve my country, and obey my God.[9]

The Beta chapter, during the period of the study, had roughly 40 active members who lived in the Sig Tau House during the academic school year. Members were from predominantly middle-class/upper middle-class backgrounds. The fraternity membership managed the chapter within fundamental guidelines established by the Sigma Tau Omega national office in Indianapolis, Indiana. General membership meetings were held once a week. These meetings, as well as other fraternity business, were governed by fraternity officers. Prospective members were selected and initiated through a pledge program.[10]

Field research methods were used to gather data during the period of the study. I had one extensive period of contact with the fraternity beginning March, 1980 and ending August, 1983. During this period, I was employed as the Proctor (head resident) of the Sig Tau chapter. In this capacity, I supervised the overall running of the House and served as a contact person when outside agencies (i.e. university greek life coordinator, city police, neighboring fraternities, etc.) contacted the fraternity. I lived in the fraternity house throughout the study. My involvement with the fraternity included chapter meetings, individual committee meetings, meals, social events, informal recreation, drinking beer with members in the uptown bar district, and other day-to-day aspects of fraternity life.

In "Naturalistic Research Traditions", Charles Bantz describes six naturalistic research methods: participant observation, interviews, organizational documents, training/instructional manuals, organizational outputs, and memoirs.[11] Each of these methods were utilized to gather data.

Throughout the field study, I maintained comprehensive notes based on participant observation encounters. Informative interviews were conducted with twelve primary interviewees of Sigma Tau Omega. Their positions within the fraternity ranged from fraternity president to pledge. Organizational documents studied included the Sigma Tau Omega Chapter Management Guide and Spectrum (a monthly publication of the Sigma Tau Omega National Office). The primary training/instructional manual is The Good Sig Tau, which is used as the pledge education manual for prospective fraternity members. Organizational outputs include articles, letters to the editor, and advertisements published in the university student newspaper. Literature studied, which was written by and about the fraternity, is listed in appendix A. Two memoirs, one by an active member and one by a Sig Tau alumnus, were also reviewed.[12] In addition, I administered a one page survey to the fraternity membership near the end of the study. Survey questions were based on findings realized from participant observation encounters and interviews. The survey is located in appendix B.

As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this article is to analyze the relationship of organizational culture and organizational conflict resolution communication. I will define the organizational culture of Sigma Tau Omega by describing the organizational culture elements, set forth by Deal and Kennedy[13], as evidenced within Sigma Tau Omega. The

described culture of Sigma Tau Omega will then by used as a perspective from which the conflict resolution communication can be interpreted.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF SIGMA TAU OMEGA

The organizational culture elements, as evidenced within Sigma Tau Omega, will be described through phenomena which are representative of each element.

Environment. The environment is shaped by the goals and objectives of the organization. As a social fraternity, the environment of Sigma Tau Omega is best described through their parties, pranks, and the threat of physical violence.

The Sig Taus had at least one party each week during the period of the study. These parties ranged from "Teas" (parties with sororities), porch parties, room parties, and special occasion parties. Beer was always available at Sig Tau parties. It seemed as if there was a party for any occasion imaginable.

The Mental Ward parties were a consistent favorite among the membership. These parties featured roughly 50 kegs of beer and were open to the public. The principle idea being that those in attendance could get "shit-faced" on beer and other social intoxicants and "go crazy". Porch parties and room parties occurred on many Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays when other parties were not planned.

Life at the Sig Tau House consisted of pranks directed toward specific members, the fraternity in general, and the local community. Fraternity members were tolerant of the antics perpetuated by fellow members. Most pranks were committed against specific members. Dana Keller, who was legally blind, frequently had his room rearranged when he was gone from the

House. One winter morning the members built a wall of snow covering the front door so they could watch him walk into it. Dana later told me "it comes with the turf."

Random pranks, directed toward the general membership, occurred less frequently. Such pranks ranged from tearing the House phone out of the wall to putting additives in the food. One night after we had brownies for dessert, we realized someone had added a social intoxicant to the recipe.

Pranks against the local community generally occurred during the spring. A typical prank involved firing flaming tennis balls from a long metal tube doused on the inside with lighter fluid. This was done at night, from the House roof, and when pedestrians were within "scaring range". Balls would be fired toward the sidewalk and fraternity members would yell "incoming!" at people on the sidewalk, as if the pedestrians were engaged in some type of warfare.

The threat of physical violence was a backdrop for interactions within the House. A typical physical confrontation is exemplified through an interaction between Carmen Merinelli and Wally Butler. After a late night party at the House, Carmen walked through the hallways and sprayed members at random with a fire extinguisher. Carmen sprayed Wally in the face and Wally called Carmen a "fuck head!". Carmen put down the extinguisher, pointed to his own chin, and said "C'mon, I dare ya." Wally got two good punches to Carmen's face before other members split them apart.[14] Ned Wagner (President) later told me: "Man, it's winter and everybody just gets uptight and tired . . . we need to blow off steam . . . just so nobody gets hurt."[15] Wally, in explaining his feelings about the fight, said "hell, I hate a lot of these dicks anyway . . . I could probably work

on liking them, but why should I, when I hate 'em . . . it's fucked up, cause we're brothers and shit."[16]

More often than not, members would apologize to each other within a few days of a physical fight, especially if they were drinking beer previous to the fight. I rarely witnessed genuine hate during confrontations such as physical fights. An unspoken rule seemed to be "just so nobody gets hurt."

Values. Values "define 'success' in concrete terms for members--'if you do this, you too will be a success'--and establish standards of achievement within the organization."[17] The values within Sigma Tau Omega were evidenced through views on money, recognition, and how they, as an organization, viewed women.

The Sig Taus did not discuss their personal financial situations very often. Most discussions about financial matters dealt with how much they would make in their intended occupations. I met no Sig Tau who was not at least partially subsidized by his parents. Members were rarely ostentatious with their material possessions, although my experience with alumni indicated a stronger concern in showing their wealth.

The fraternity promoted different types of recognition. Types of recognition included the Top 20 Award, given by the National organization to the 20 top ranked chapters in the country; formal recognition at chapter meetings and outside meetings; and the "Dick of the Week", which was awarded to the member who committed the gravest social error.

Formal recognition of members was acknowledged at chapter meetings and in Sig Tau publications. Each year, Service Awards were voted upon and presented at chapter meetings. Service Awards were presented to the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior who made the biggest contributions to

the fraternity. Distinguished alumni were frequently acknowledged in Sig Tau publications.

Informal recognition was frequently given in and outside of meetings. The following situation exemplifies such recognition. "Brad Yarnell, alumni relations officer, thanked three members who helped with the home-coming dinner last night. The membership applauded after thanks was given."[18] The aforementioned occurred during a chapter meeting.

The Dick of the Week was awarded each week at chapter meetings. It was a trophy which consisted of a six inch, condom covered, broom handle tip, placed vertically on a wood base. The trophy was presented to the member who committed the gravest social error during the previous week. It was first awarded to Skip Hansen, the day after he puked in his dates' purse. "Bill Nickles received the award after sleep walking into the dining room and urinating on the floor. His urine found its way from the dining room floor to the sleeping quarters located in the basement below, and onto the pillow of Wayne King, the Vice-President."[19]

Being a social fraternity, the membership placed a high priority on their interactions with women. I know of no member who did not have at least one date during the period of the study. Each spring, the fraternity elected a "sweetheart" to represent the Sig Taus at various Sig Tau functions throughout the following academic year. A picture of the sweetheart was hung in the television room. The sweetheart was always dating a member of the fraternity at the time of her election to the position.

The membership was generally respectful of the sweetheart and their own steady girlfriends. However, relations with other women were frequently abusive and the subject of much conversation among the members. The most extreme, and most popular, related event occurred during a bachelor party

which honored three members. I was not present at the party, but heard a great deal about it. Without going into details, or making moral judgements, it should be sufficient to say a young woman with purple hair voluntarily engaged in oral sex with roughly 25 men. Nicknamed "Purple Haze", her name has become legend.[20] There were many, less extreme, events and similar references throughout the period of the study.

Heroes. Heroes "personify the values of the culture and act as role models".[21] Jack Armstrong best exemplified this postion among the membership. He served as chapter president during the first year of the study. He was an autocratic leader and frequently dealt with problems in a direct manner. Jack was a boxer on the Midwestern State University boxing team and he made it clear he would use force to enforce fraternity rules.

Don Ingram, nicknamed Jed because of his "wild" tendencies, broke the kitchen door by slamming it "for the fuck of it." At the next chapter meeting Jack Armstrong stated his feelings about the broken door during the President's Report. Jack: "I wanna know who broke the door and I wanna know now . . . . Some of you guys know who did it, but I wanna give the guilty person a chance to be a man about it." There was a 30 second pause as Jack stared at various faces in the room. Jed:"Thank me. Fuck you, I did it."[22] This was a typical approach for Jack to use.

Comments about Jack, during interviews, served to elaborate on this observation. Norm Egan: "He was an authoritarian . . . but he was fair. Even if he didn't like you, but you were a brother, he'd do his best to help you out . . . he'd punch if necessary."[23] Rudy Shnider: "Armstrong was a legend in his own time . . . guys knew he'd punch . . . . His time in office was more like an era."[24] Jim Hangen: "John (who followed Jack as President) is a shadow of Armstrong . . . but he's not nearly as strong."[25]

Jack believed in structure, authority, follow-through and "sticking by my guns, even when I fuck up; in the long run guys will respect you for it."[26]

Rites and Rituals. Rites and rituals are the systematic and programmed routines of day-to-day life in an organization. They provide the potent and visible examples of what the organization stands for.[27] Rites and rituals within Sigma Tau Omega were best exemplified through formal rituals, the pledge program, and informal rituals.

Formal ritual was taken seriously by the chapter members. I heard some nasty jokes alleged against each others girlfriends, but I never heard jokes about fraternity rituals.

> The Ritual of our Fraternity is the one element of Sigma Tau Omega that you will share with all Sig Taus across the continent. It expresses the essence and purpose of the good Sig Tau . . . . We have seen our Fraternity grow, develop and change substantially, but our men have enjoyed the same sense of brotherhood down through our 120 years. This is why our Ritual means so much today; the Sig Tau initiated today relates to all other Sig Taus of his and other generations because both have reacted to an identical personal experience.[28] (The Good Sig Tau)

The formal ritual was established by the national office of the fraternity.

Sig Tau ritual was initially instilled in new members during the pledge program. The pledge program lasted for one academic quarter and ended in a final "hell" week. Aside from the formal ritual, there were many informal traditions the new pledge experienced. For example, during the pledge period, the pledges entered the House through the side door, referred to active members as sir/Mr., answered the House phone, and each time they

used a set of steps they had to state the names of the eight founding fathers of Sigma Tau Omega. The House was designed with eight sets of steps, each set containing eight steps. During hell week, they slept in the basement, wore their "scummy clothes" (jeans and a t-shirt that were not washed all week) in the House, served meals to actives, and were generally harassed throughout each night, leaving little time for sleep.

There were a variety of informal traditional activities which occurred in recognition of events such as birthdays, pinnings (when a member gave his fraternity pin to his girlfriend to acknowledge pre-engagement), and engagements. On the day of a member's birthday, he was customarily carried out to the college green (area directly across the street from the House) after dinner, his clothes were removed from him, and the leftovers from dinner were poured on him. Then the member would be left to run back across the green to the House. This was called "greening". If a member got pinned, his head was dunked in the toilet and the toilet was flushed. This was called a "swirley".

When a member got engaged, he was carried to the house (usually a sorority house) where his girlfriend lived and chained to a tree (or similar stationary object). That is, he was stripped to his underwear and the chain was run through his underwear and locked to the tree. This left the member in an awkward position whereby he would lose his underwear if he ran away. A bucket of dinner leftovers was then poured on him. By this time, there generally would be numerous spectators and the member's fiance would be allowed to offer the member a towel to cover himself with.

The following question was asked on the fraternity survey. "In what way is tradition important within the fraternity? Why?" Eighty percent of those surveyed strongly advocated the need for tradition. The need for

tradition was related with the importance of brotherhood and consistency among actives and alumni. As stated by Rudy Shnider, a recipient of all three of the aforementioned informal rituals, "Tradition is what this place is based on . . . . I really like the idea of knowing I can come back in 20 years and have a place to come to.[29]

Cultural Network. The cultural network is an informal means of communication which serves as a backdrop for life in the organization. It communicates values and it carries the hidden hierarchy of power within the organization.[30] The cultural network in Sigma Tau Omega was evidenced through clothing, language, the role of professional football, and the different academic majors.

Clothing styles at the Sig Tau House were consistently conservative. Practically all members owned jackets which had "The Sig Taus" written on the back. The Sigma Tau Omega greek letters were frequently inscribed on shirts, hats, shorts, sweatpants, and sweatshirts. "Preppy" clothes were also popular. Typical preppy clothes included "topsiders" worn without socks (brown deck shoes), clean jeans, Izod sport shirt with an alligator on the left breast and, in cooler weather, a long sleeve dress shirt over the sport shirt. Periodically, a fad would occur, and a group of Sig Taus would follow it. Such fads included cutting the sleeves off of long sleeved-hooded sweaters, wearing black rimmed sunglasses, and carrying a bandanna in one's back pocket.

Language deviation was abundantly clear through fraternity jargon. Practically all jargon had sexual overtones. "Sniff" initially meant you were going to look for a female date; it evolved into an all purpose term for behavior that occupied one's time (i.e. going to the library to sniff books). "Reception" dealt with receiving sexual favors from a female;

"massive reception" indicated an all night affair. Everyone at one time or another was a "dick", meaning one exhibited any type of behavior viewed as unfavorable (i.e. not going out drinking). "Boned" meant one had intercourse. "Wanky" meant smells bad.

"Douche" frequently served as a suffix to member names (i.e. Halldouche instead of Hall). There was no clear meaning assigned to the word douche and it was not an insult to have douche periodically added to one's name. Douche was an in-house term, rarely used outside of the House, which received meaning from paralanguage cues. The first time I was called Schnelldouche, I interpreted it as a sign of my informal acceptance within the fraternity. It occurred after a night of heavy drinking in the uptown bar district.

Members frequently argued about pro football teams during the football season. Heated arguments occurred at times and, if both parties were stubborn about their beliefs, a bet would be made regarding speculation of the season's outcome. When rival teams played on television, group members would generally align with either team. It became my opinion members used the pro football teams as a means to express like or dislike for other members. That is, if a disliked member's favorite team was losing a game, certain members might exhibit exaggerated enthusiasm because the team was losing.

The following question was asked on the fraternity survey. "It is common for fraternity members to root against a pro football team. In such situations, do you think fraternity members are rooting against the pro football team or against other members who happen to be strong fans of the pro football team?" Fifty three percent of the respondents indicated members were rooting against other members, 11% of the respondents indicated members

were rooting against the pro football team, and 28% of the respondents indicated members were rooting against both members and the pro football team. Thus, members could express dislike for each other without overtly stating the dislike (i.e. "the Cleveland Browns are assholes" could carry the same context as "you're an asshole").

Similarly, members periodically assailed the academic major being studied by another member with the same underlying effect (i.e. if a management major was mad at an organizational communication major he might say "organizational communication is for assholes who can't pass the management math requirement.") Thus, a base was laid for members to covertly express dislike for each other without overtly acknowledging personal dislikes.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMUNICATION WITHIN SIGMA TAU OMEGA

A primary objective of this study is to better understand the organizational conflict resolution communication within Sigma Tau Omega by considering the role of organizational culture in providing a backdrop for such occurrences. The following discussion explains approaches used in conflict resolution communication, describes the variety of issues encountered, correlates these approaches with conflict resolution communication theory, and clarifies how these approaches worked. Throughout this discussion, the role of previously described organizational culture elements will be evidenced.

The fraternity used voting in formal settings and, at times, resolved issues through discussion. Voting was the established procedure for conflict resolution and decision making. The informal hierarchy was based on fraternity office held (if any), physical size, wit, and pin number (seniority). Participation within the organization led to knowledge about the functioning of the organization, which in turn led to referent power within the organiz-

ation. Such participation was usually acknowledged when involved members were elected to fraternity offices.

Formal Conflict Resolution. The fraternity held chapter meetings each Sunday night throughout the academic year. Attendance was mandatory and meetings usually lasted about an hour. The President presided over the chapter meetings and utilized a formal agenda. Inputs and comments were directed to the President. He was responsible for running meetings in accordance with the fraternity constitution. Each President, during the period of the study, evidenced his knowledge of the Sig Tau constitution and the enforcement of these regulations.

Voting was the main method of decision making and conflict resolution. The chapter would usually discuss an issue until it was approved or disapproved. A ballot or verbal vote was taken if there was disagreement. Casual votes were frequently taken on less controversial issues; the President would ask for a show of hands, but not bother to count if a majority was evident. Exceptions, to the use of voting, occurred when the Executive Board or individual officers, such as the President, could make decisions without a chapter vote. Such exceptions were designated within the constitution and bylaws.

Informal Conflict Resolution. An informal hierarchy existed within the Sig Tau House. The hierarchy was based on office held within the fraternity (if any), physical size of the member, wit of the member, and the member's pin number (seniority). The President was at the top of the office hierarchy. Chapter President was a formal position, but its power carried over into informal conflict resolution situations. The President not only held a position that evidenced the respect the membership had for him, he also gained a powerful position regarding the enforcement of bylaws. Other

offices included vice-president, treasurer, secretary, pledge master (in charge of the pledge program), and the house manager (in charge of physical maintenance).

Physical size, and it's correlation with being a good fighter, carried influence in the informal hierarchy. Once a member established himself as a good fighter, his threat would be interpreted as the final warning before he would attack. Jack Armstrongshowed himself to be a competent fighter during his freshman and sophomore years, but I never knew him to punch another member during his junior and senior years. He had a reputation for punching, and the membership stopped cold in their tracks on the occasions he made threats.

A good wit could aid a member's informal influence. Everybody in the House was vulnerable to the wit of fellow members. Such vulnerable areas included the attractiveness of one's girlfriend, one's academic major, one's grade point average, and one's physical appearance. These types of verbal jabs were frequently shared at the Sig Tau House. Receiving such comments generally served to indicate that one was accepted. Circumstances seemed to dictate the influence of wit in the House. Such circumstances included who was present, the setting, who made the statement, and who (if anybody) was the butt of the joke.

Pin numbers were assigned to members when they pledged the fraternity. Thus, older members had lower pin numbers and newer members had higher pin numbers. The lower the pin number the higher the seniority. Pin numbers were used in the room selection process and for deciding which members would be given the four parking spaces in the House driveway. Pin numbers also offered an abstract referent power. That is, members who had been affiliated with the chapter for a long time, who had lower

pin numbers, were periodically referred to for advice on how things were done or "how things used to be."

The following question was asked in the fraternity survey. "In informal situations (outside of meetings), which one of the following factors most strongly affects an individual's influence?" Many members indicated more than one factor. The following percentages reflect how many times each factor was indicated by the respondents.

42% office held in the fraternity

42% physical size of the member

24% pin number

39% wit, sense of humor, etc.

Ninety seven separate issues were analyzed during the period of the study. These issues were selected for analysis as they were representative of behavior and phenomena consistently recognized during the period of the study. Each of these typical issues were classified according to the setting they occurred in, formal or informal, and the level of controversy which occurred, high or low level. Thus, there are four quadrants: high level controversy issues in formal settings, low level controversy issues in formal settings, high level controversy issues in informal settings, and low level controversy issues in informal settings.

Formal settings were limited to chapter meetings and individual committee meetings. Informal settings included all other situations. The distinction between high and low level controversy issues was more arbitrary. I viewed all issues as being on one continuum, regarding controversy, and worked to recognize them for the degree of controversy they represented within the fraternity. Thus, issues representing a higher degree of controversy

were classified as high level controversy issues and issues representing a lower degree of controversy were classified as low level controversy issues.

Aside from the setting and degree of controversy, distinctions were also recognized according to the types of issues. There were four types of issues: logistics, finances, principle, and personality. Issues of logistics involved the physical maintenance and day-to-day management of the fraternity. Issues of finance involved organizational expenses and the distribution of funds. Issues of principle involved ethical questions and the interpretation of the fraternity's philosophical base. Issues of personality involved differences between members.

FOUR QUADRANTS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION ATTEMPTS

	Formal Settings	Informal Settings
High Level Controversy	Issues of Logistics: seven Issues of Finance: six Issues of Principle: one	Issues of Logistics: four Issues of Finance: six Issues of Personality: 13
Low Level Controversy	Issues of Logistics: 19 Issues of Finance: three Issues of Personality: seven	Issues of Logistics: six Issues of Finance: six Issues of Principle: two Issues of Personality: 17

Conflict is expressed through communication. The communication, if it's verbal, nonverbal, or written, serves to convey meaning. Throughout the field study, I not only observed conflict resolution, I more specifically made observations of the communication which the conflict was expressed

through.

Pondy synthesizes conflict concepts and models and defines conflict through a sequence of five events; latent conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict, and conflict aftermath.[31] This sequence was more evident with high level controversy issues, rather than low level controversy issues, as high level controversy issues were more intense and feelings were more explicitly expressed. One could more readily recognize high level controversy issues progressing from latent conflict and perceived conflict through felt conflict, manifest conflict, and conflict aftermath by observing the communication expressed among involved members. Low level controversy issues evidenced the same sequence, but in a less obvious manner due to the intensity of the issues.

Robbins explains that conflict has a number of causes and can be separated into three categories: communication, structure, and personal-behavior factors. Conflict evolving from the communicative source represents problems related with semantic difficulties, misunderstandings, and noise in communication channels. Structural conflict deals with organizational roles and barriers which are often introduced by management. Personal-behavior factors are based on personal value systems.[32] Most of the issues I observed, in the four quadrants of conflict resolution, involved personal-behavior factors. Although there were issues involving the communicative sources and structural factors, most conflicts in Sigma Tau Omega stemmed from personal-behavior factors.

"Conflict between parties that mutually perceive themselves to be equal in power and legitimacy is more difficult to resolve cooperatively than when there is a mutual recognition of differential power and legitimacy."[33] This proposition was evidenced in my analysis of the

fraternity conflict resolution communication. The fraternity overtly acknowledged differential power and legitimacy among its members; this usually aided effective conflict resolution.

A primary finding in this study deals with how those who exhibit power, in conflict resolution communication situations, are able to attain and maintain such a position. The data indicates participation within the organization led to knowledge about the functioning of the organization, which in turn led to referent power within the organization. Such participation was usually acknowledged when involved members were voted into fraternity offices.

There were four Presidents during the period of the study and all four served in subordinate offices before becoming President. A common progression was for the freshman and sophomore members to fulfill subordinate offices and functions within the fraternity, and juniors and seniors generally filled the highest offices. That is, the executive officers had always participated at lower levels, attained knowledge about the organization and its processes, and worked into positions of higher power.

In reflecting on the ramifications of the participation-knowledge-referent power progression, I have sought to understand if this progression is common in other types of organizations and if this progression is attributable to the particular organizational culture. An example of an exception is evidenced in the U.S. military. In the Air Force, for example, Chief Master Sergeants (enlisted rank) are commonly recognized for their referent power over junior grade officers. Although any junior grade officer (Second Lieutenant through Captain) formally outranks a

Chief Master Sergeant, the junior grade officer will frequently rely on senior grade enlisted personnel for their referent power. Such a contradiction, between the informal and formal chains of command, is clearly attributable to the organizational culture as the formal ranking structure is established through Air Force regulation.

My findings in this study indicate a direct connection between organizational culture and conflict resolution communication approaches within the organization. A question for further study is "could better approaches to conflict resolution communication be developed by altering the culture of an organization?" This study is offered as a base for such analysis.

NOTES

1. Terrence E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy, Corporate Culture: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1982); Michael Pacanowsky and Linda L. Putnam, Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983); H. Schwartz and S. Davis, "Matching Corporate Culture and Business Strategy," Organizational Dynamics, Summer 1981, pp. 30-48; M. Pacanowsky and N. O'Donnel-Trujillo, "Organizational Communication as Cultural Performance," Communication Monographs, 50 (1983), pp. 127-147; and Donal Carbaugh, "Cultural Communication and Organizing," International and Intercultural Communication Annual, 9 (1985), ch. 2.
2. Collegiate greek lettered social organizations are acknowledged as a distinct type of organization on college campuses. The following publications highlight this acknowledgement by stressing the importance of the initiation programs. W.K. Amiot and E.M. Cottingham, Brotherhood: Myth or Mystique? (Sigma Nu, Inc.: Educational Foundation, 1976); R.E. Barth, "A Study of the Values of Fraternity Men and Non-Fraternity Men," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Ohio University 1964; and T.A. Leemon, The Rites of Passage in a Student Culture (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1972).
3. Donal Carbaugh, "Cultural Communication as Organization: A Case Study of Speech in an Organizational Setting." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Denver, Colorado, 1985, p. 1.
4. Thomas Harris, "Characteristics of Organizational Cultures: A Communication Perspective." Paper presented at the annual meeting of

the Speech Communication Association, Denver, Colorado, 1985, p. 5; M. Pacanowsky and N. O'Donnel-Trujillo, "Communication and Organizational Cultures," Western Journal of Speech Communication, 46 (1982), p. 122; and Ernest Bormann in Pacanowsky and Putnam, pp. 121-122.

5. Carbaugh, 1985, p. 1.
6. Deal and Kennedy, pp. 13-15.
7. Harris, p. 8.
8. Gary L. Kreps, "Using Interpretive Research: The Development of a Socialization Program at RCA," in Pacanowsky and Putnam, pp. 243-256.
9. The Good Sig Tau (Indianapolis, Indiana: Sigma Tau Omega, 1977), p. 3. The Good Sig Tau served as the pledge education manual.
10. A pledge program was formulated three times a year as a means of training prospective members for possible admission to the fraternity. A pledge class was started at the beginning of the fall, winter, and spring quarters. The pledge period lasted ten weeks and was intended to orient the prospective member (pledge) to fraternity life and initiate him into the organization.
11. Charles Bantz, "Naturalistic Research Traditions," in Pacanowsky and Putnam, pp. 55-71.
12. Alan Neff, an English major, kept a diary which detailed his life in the fraternity. Upon graduation, he allowed me to read through his diary. This was beneficial as I could compare my observations of events with his observations of the same events. The views of an alumnus, not from Beta chapter, provided a general perspective on the role of Sigma Tau Omega in the larger society. E.L. Heminger, Sigma Tau Omega: A Reflection of Society, (Princeton: Princeton University

Press, 1975).

13. Deal and Kennedy, pp. 13-15.

14. Fieldnotes. Note #253. Compilation of statements regarding a physical fight between Wally Butler and Carmen Merinelli.

15. Fieldnotes. Note #254. Interview with Ned Wagner at the fraternity House.

16. Fieldnotes. Note #255. Conversation with Wally Butler in the Proctor's apartment.

17. Deal and Kennedy, pp. 13-14.

18. Fieldnotes. Note #80. Observation of a discussion at a weekly fraternity chapter meeting.

19. Fieldnotes. Note #84. Conversation with fraternity members during lunch at the fraternity House.

20. Fieldnotes. Note #91. Conversation with various fraternity members during lunch and early afternoon at the fraternity House.

21. Harris, p. 7.

22. Fieldnotes. Note #224. Observation of President's Report at a fraternity weekly chapter meeting.

23. Fieldnotes. Note #240. Interview with Norm Egan in my school office.

24. Fieldnotes. Note #41. Interview with Rudy Shnider at the fraternity House.

25. Fieldnotes. Note #42. Interview with Jim Hangen at the fraternity house.

26. Fieldnotes. Note #43. Telephone interview with Jack Armstrong.

27. Deal and Kennedy, pp. 14-15.

28. The Good Sig Tau, p. 9.

29. Fieldnotes. Note #36. Interview with Rudy Shnider at the fraternity

House.

30. Deal and Kennedy, p. 15.

31. L.R. Pondy, "Organizational Conflict: Concepts and Models", Administrative Science Quarterly, 12 (1967), pp. 296-320.

32. S.P. Robbins, Managing Organizational Conflict: A Nontraditional Approach (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 29-30.

33. M. Deutsch, The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 44.

APPENDIX A

Fraternity Literature Reviewed

Advertisements for Sigma Tau Omega in the Midwestern State University Post.

Articles about the Sigma Tau Omega chapter in the Midwestern State University Post.

Beta Chapter of Sigma Tau Omega History handout. Obtained during Rush week. Fall, 1981.

The Good Sig Tau, a pledge education manual. Indianapolis, Indiana: Sigma Tau Omega, 1977.

Letters between the Sigma Tau Omega Director of Program Development and the Sigma Tau Omega Proctor at Midwestern State University.

Letters to the Editor, written by/about Sigma Tau Omega members, in the Midwestern State University Post.

Sigma Tau Omega Chapter Management Guide, 1934 (revised 1977).

Spectrum. A monthly publication of the Sigma Tau Omega National Office.

APPENDIX B

This Researcher's Fraternity Survey

How long have you been a fraternity member?

What was your motivation for joining the fraternity:
___ social ___ save money ___ political
___ other _____

Which of the following best describes your membership status:
___ member
___ committee chairman
___ administrative council member

Which of the following best describes the economic background you grew up in?
___ lower class
___ lower-middle class
___ middle class
___ upper-middle class
___ upper class

In what way is tradition important within the fraternity? Why?

In informal conflict situations (outside of meetings), which one of the following factors most strongly affects an individual's influence:
___ office held within the fraternity
___ physical size of the member
___ pin no.
___ wit, sense of humor, etc.
___ other _____

If a fraternity member consistently violated the standards/ philosophy of the fraternity, and a majority of the membership wanted to cancel the individual's membership, what would be a logical and fair approach in dealing with such a situation?

If a fellow Co-op member borrowed $50 from you to go on vacation, and then (after six months of avoiding you) made it clear s/he wasn't going to pay you back . . . would you most likely:
___ take s/he to court
___ verbally threaten the person
___ physically threaten the person
___ physically assault the person
___ other _____

Do Co-op members who do a lot of extra work for the Co-op receive adequate recognition for their extra efforts? If so, what are some of the forms of such recognition?

If a member doesn't do his work duty, should he be allowed to eat dinner?

It is common for fraternity members to root against a pro football team. In such situations, do you think members are rooting against the pro football team or against other members who happen to be strong fans of the pro football team?